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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EUN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZL](#) [ZK](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [SY](#) [LE](#)
CU, SU, CD, CT, SIPDIS
SUBJECT: APPROACHING THE EU IN ADVANCE OF THE JUNE 16-17
FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING (GAERC)

¶1. (U) Classified by Jeffrey Giauque, Senior Political Officer, EUR/ERA. Reasons: 1.4(b) and (d).

¶2. (U) This is an action request. See paragraph 24.

¶3. (SBU) Summary: EU Foreign Ministers will hold their next General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) meeting in Brussels on June 16-17. We expect the agenda to include: Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Western Balkans, Central Asia, Cuba, Sudan/Darfur, and Chad/Central African Republic. We also wish to ensure that the EU retains a strong stance on Belarus and Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. A background section covering some of these issues is provided prior to a section containing talking points. Points are to be delivered as soon as possible at the appropriate level to EU members only. Other posts should not deliver these points. Posts are requested to include the SIPDIS caption on their response cables.

BACKGROUND

IRAN

¶4. (C) For several months now, we have urged the EU to take three new actions on Iran in order to pressure it to suspend its proliferation-sensitive nuclear activities and come to the negotiating table: 1) Adopt UNSCR 1803 into EU policy, 2) designate 20 additional entities (including Bank Melli) and 15 additional individuals associated with Iran's nuclear and missile programs under existing EU policy, and 3) adopt a series of truly new autonomous measures that go beyond existing EU policy. If the EU is able to take all three of these steps, it will send a strong signal to Iran and encourage others to do likewise. The additional designations have been moving forward since Italy and Cyprus lifted their holds on them in late April. We expected the full additional designation list to be

formally adopted without discussion at an EU Council meeting (Agriculture and Fisheries ministers) on May 19, but the EU again delayed action.

15. (C) Unfortunately, the situation with the adoption of UNSCR 1803 into EU policy and the adoption of new autonomous measures to go beyond existing EU policy is even more problematic. Adoption of 1803 into EU policy has been delayed by internal EU discussion on whether to carry out a minimalist, literal implementation of the resolution or to go beyond mere transposition of 1803 and include new EU measures in the updated policy and regulations. A meeting of EU Political and Security Committee ambassadors in late April failed to reach consensus on these issues and the Slovenian EU Presidency has not set a time line for future deliberation on 1803 implementation and new measures. Behind the scenes, the UK and France want to ensure that they have the support of a critical mass of countries for a concrete (and expansive) 1803 package before holding another discussion with all 27 member states. In particular, they wish to avoid any open-ended, undisciplined debate on the matter. EU Iran watchers in Brussels tell USEU that it is unlikely the Slovenians have enough time or the desire to pursue this task before the end of their Presidency on 30 June. Thus, even though we have urged the EU to act on all three measures described above at the June 16-17 GAERC, some may want to wait for the start of the French Presidency on July 1. We should not accept this delay, however, and should press EU members to take quick action, lest they send Tehran the signal that Europe does not want to keep pressure on Iran.

16. (C) The decision not to approve the pending EU designations was made by High Representative Solana himself. Solana placed all EU action on Iran on hold until he visits Tehran to deliver the refreshed P5+1 incentives package. The Iranians stalled on this visit for several weeks by refusing to give Solana a date for the trip. They have finally now agreed that he can visit Tehran June 13-15. Regardless of what happens with this visit, we need the EU to take decisive action in all three of the areas described above.

IRAQ

17. (C) The EU has made clear it is committed to a partnership with Iraq and is actively exploring options for enhanced engagement. From 2003-2007 the European Commission provided more than \$1.1 billion in assistance to Iraq, given largely to the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI) - the main multilateral mechanism for assisting Iraq. In the future, however, the EC wants to deliver its assistance bilaterally so that the EU's contributions can be more clearly identified and recognized. On March 13, the European Parliament adopted a report recommending an enhanced EU role in Iraq, including proposals to increase the EC diplomatic and assistance presence (key to this will be finding new premises in Baghdad, as those currently located at the British Embassy are too small); step-up support for UN activities; assist refugees; and support democracy, national reconciliation and government institutions with technical assistance and capacity building. France assumes the European Union presidency on July 1 and is expected to encourage greater EU engagement. French FM Kouchner visited Iraq May 31-June 1, promising additional support for refugees and confirming France's desire to assist Iraq.

18. (C) Prime Minister Maliki's visit to Brussels on April 16 and 17 was a welcome step in building the EU-Iraq relationship. Maliki met with High Representative Javier Solana and thanked the EU for its Integrated Rule of Law Mission for Iraq (EUJUST LEX). The EU committed to extend and expand this program, which to date has trained more than 1,450 Iraqi judges and other rule of law professionals in 18 EU member states. Solana expressed

interest in visiting Baghdad as a follow-up to Maliki's visit to Brussels; this would further cement the EU-Iraq relationship and internationalize support for Iraq as it strives to achieve security and prosperity.

¶9. (SBU) Negotiations for a new EU-Iraq Trade and Cooperation Agreement will resume this month. Four rounds of talks have focused on such topics as human rights, trade in goods and services, and customs and taxation. The EU and Iraq are also negotiating an agreement for Iraq to supply gas to EU countries.

¶10. (U) EU High Representative Solana, Slovenian FM Rupel, and European Commission Deputy Director General for External Relations Hugues Mingarelli represented the EU at the May 29 International Compact with Iraq Annual Review Conference in Stockholm. There was near universal acknowledgement at the meeting that Iraq had made real progress over the past year. However, continued success depends on Iraq marshalling its own substantial financial, human and physical resources with appropriate assistance. The Commission and the individual European states were of one voice in expressing their support for Iraq and intentions for increasing engagement. The European Union has budgeted Euros 90 million (about USD 135 million at current exchange rates) for technical and humanitarian assistance in 2008, on top of the Euros 829 million (some USD 1.1 billion at then prevailing rates) disbursed from 2003 through 2007. Mingarelli added a strong exhortation to Iraq to strengthen its structures for implementing ICI measures. France pledged to uphold this engagement when it takes over the EU Presidency in June. The UK, Denmark, Spain and Germany said their bilateral assistance programs would continue. Greece pledged to "soon" overcome hurdles and honor its commitment made at the ICI's launch a year ago to reduce Iraq's debt.

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

¶11. (SBU) The United States is working toward the vision of a two-state solution with Israel and a democratic Palestine living side by side in peace and security. The Annapolis Conference in November 2007 re-launched Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations with the shared goal of a peace agreement before the end of 2008. The parties further undertook to fulfill their commitments under the 2003 Roadmap, and agreed that implementation of any peace agreement must be subject to implementation of the Roadmap. The U.S. agreed at Annapolis to monitor and judge the parties' progress under the Roadmap. Since Annapolis, we have been working to achieve progress on four tracks: bilateral negotiations, implementation of the Roadmap and improving conditions on the ground, building Palestinian institutional capacity and supporting economic development, and sustaining and expanding regional support for the process.

¶12. (SBU) Bilateral negotiations began in earnest shortly after Annapolis with the creation of a negotiating structure and a vigorous schedule of bilateral talks on the full spectrum of issues. The parties have kept the substance of these talks private, which reflects the seriousness of their effort. As part of this effort, Secretary Rice has enlisted the services of General (ret.) Jim Jones, former Commandant of the Marine Corps and NATO Supreme Allied Commander, who is looking at the regional security aspects of a permanent status agreement. The Secretary and Assistant Secretary Welch are also deeply and personally engaged in supporting the parties' efforts in this area. We must recognize, however, that a peace agreement cannot be imposed from outside, and it is the parties themselves who must work through the difficult compromises necessary for peace. The United States will support them in this task, will work to ensure the talks stay on track, and, when appropriate, we will offer ideas to help facilitate progress.

¶13. (SBU) We are working to promote progress by the

parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Roadmap. For the Palestinians, this means combating and dismantling the infrastructure of terrorism, undertaking institutional reforms, and ending incitement. For Israel, it means halting settlement expansion, removing unauthorized outposts, easing movement and access to improve Palestinian economic and humanitarian conditions, facilitating security coordination, and re-opening Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem consistent with previous agreements. The President and Secretary Rice have asked LTG William Fraser III to monitor developments in this area and to work with the parties to promote progress on Roadmap implementation. Given the secret nature of the bilateral negotiations, progress on the ground is crucial to reflect the seriousness of the process as well as progress that is being achieved in the negotiations.

¶14. (SBU) We are also working to support Palestinian economic development and institutional capacity building. France hosted a donors' conference in December which generated pledges of \$7.7 billion dollars in budgetary and programmatic support for the PA. The Ad Hoc Liaison Committee met on May 2 to maintain close donor coordination. Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, in his role as Quartet Representative, has taken a leadership role on this issue, identifying priority projects and working with the parties and international donors to facilitate implementation on the ground. The United States is doing its part. In Paris, we pledged \$555 million in support for the PA, including \$150 million in budgetary support, which was delivered to the Fayyad government in mid-March. Additionally, LTG Keith Dayton, the U.S. Security Coordinator, is working to reform and professionalize the Palestinian security forces through a program to train, equip, and garrison members of the Presidential Guard and National Security Forces. There is a particularly urgent need for budgetary support for the Palestinians, and we are strongly encouraging Arab governments to do their part.

¶15. (SBU) Finally, we are working to sustain and expand regional support for the parties' efforts. Arab political and financial support will be crucial in order for both Israel and the Palestinians to make the painful compromises necessary for peace. The Arab Peace Initiative was an important step. Now, as President Bush said in July 2007, "Arab nations should build on this initiative - by ending the fiction that Israel does not exist, stopping the incitement of hatred in their official media, and sending cabinet-level visitors to Israel."

¶16. (SBU) We will continue to work to promote progress on each of these four tracks, each of them vital to the goal of a peace agreement by the end of the year. Secretary Rice is traveling regularly to the region to advance the process. President Bush's Middle East trip in May reflects his personal engagement and commitment to this issue. There are substantial obstacles that must be overcome to reach the goal of a permanent status agreement. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful that an agreement can be reached before the end of 2008.

LEBANON

¶17. (SBU) The USG is working to promote a peaceful, democratic, sovereign, and economically vibrant Lebanon. The political impasse that began in Lebanon after the opposition's November 2006 cabinet walkout over Lebanese government support for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon descended into violence in May 2008 after the Siniora government attempted to rein in Hizballah's state-within-a-state. Hizballah militiamen took control of west Beirut and closed Beirut's airport, sparking country-wide clashes. Arab League-mediated negotiations in Doha, Qatar resulted in the election of General Michel Sleiman as President on May 25, agreement to form a national unity government, principles for a new electoral law, and a

commitment to continue dialogue on "the government's relations with other groups," i.e. Hizballah's armed status. Cabinet formation is underway.

¶18. (C) Most EU members appreciate our concerns about Syrian interference in Lebanese politics, support for terrorist organizations in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, facilitation of flows of foreign fighters into Iraq, efforts to undermine the peace process, and possession of weapons of mass destruction and an unreported nuclear program. However, robust European economic ties with Syria leave little appetite for full isolation, especially now that Lebanon's latest political crisis is over. For its part, Syria has successfully courted European engagement by pointing to its role in facilitating election of a Lebanese president and its indirect negotiations with Israel as evidence of its willingness to shift course. Syria is exploiting European engagement to legitimize its destabilizing foreign policies and repressive domestic rule.

CUBA

¶19. (C) The EU is considering dropping its 2003 Restrictive Measures, political sanctions established after the arrest of 75 dissidents in Cuba and "suspended" in 2005 in anticipation of greater reform in Cuba, but not eliminated altogether. The Measures halted high-level meetings between the GOC and the EU, as well as EU representative and member state (MS) visits to Havana, and implemented a policy of inviting dissidents to EU MS national day celebrations in Havana. Even after the Measures were suspended, most EU members continued to restrict high-level meetings with the GOC in Havana. Without major GOC actions or EU demands for Cuban action, dropping the Measures could legitimize Raul Castro's regime. The EU is also committed to following the "dual-track approach" on Cuba - equal engagement with the GOC and dissidents.

¶20. (C) The Spanish, who began a political and human rights dialogue with the GOC in April 2007, are pressing other members to drop the Measures in order to begin an EU political/human rights dialogue with the GOC. The EU made it clear last year - and previously to the GOC - that it was already willing to engage in such a dialogue. However, the Cubans will not discuss human rights with the EU unless the Restrictive Measures are dropped, and the Spanish (and others) are helping them in their goal.

¶21. (C) EU interlocutors often stress the small changes the GOC has recently implemented: signing the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); releasing four political prisoners to Spain; allowing the sales of cell phones and computers; and increased cooperativeness in the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) and other multilateral spheres. Many EU members agree that the changes the GOC has made are small. However, EU governments are also interested in whether these changes predict substantive reforms in the near future and whether the EU can best influence that process by talking to the GOC. Therefore, many in the EU are being swayed by the Spanish argument that the EU needs to engage the Cuban government. The French, the Italians, and the German MFA are squarely on the side of the Spanish, along with the Portuguese, the Slovaks, and the Austrians. The strongest holdouts are the British, the Czechs, and the Hungarians.

¶22. (C) The Spanish have allegedly offered a tit-for-tat: the rest of the Member States agree to drop the 2003 Restrictive Measures at the June 16 GAERC, and the Spanish allow a mention of Cuba in the U.S.-EU Summit Declaration. While that would be a poor exchange for us, it's likely the Measures will go regardless - the only question is how strong the resulting EU-Cuba dialogue will be. The Czechs, the UK, the Hungarians, the Swedes, and the Danes are currently fighting for a robust compromise that would set benchmarks for the Cubans if the EU opened a dialogue,

such as the release of political prisoners, the Cuban public's access to information, freedom for the EU to pursue unimpeded engagement with the opposition, and Cuba's ratification of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. The UK has also proposed that the dialogue's renewal each year be dependent on whether a consensus of the EU agreed that the GOC meets the benchmarks. A coalition of EU members, convened by the Slovenes, has composed a much weaker draft. But, if the final statement does not sufficiently address the concerns of the Czechs, UK, and others, they may block consensus on dropping the Measures altogether.

¶23. (C) Either EU retention of the Measures or establishment of concrete benchmarks and consequences designed to provoke real GOC action should fit our policy. Regardless, the EU should will retain its strong 1996 Common Position. We should argue that the timing of dropping the Restrictive Measures now would send a strong signal legitimizing Raul Castro's cosmetic steps as sufficient unless the EU establishes new benchmarks on human rights. It is likely the EU will ultimately drop the Measures; therefore, we should urge them to use this step as leverage with the Cubans to push for significant movement in democratization and movement on human rights, such as unconditional release of all political prisoners, unimpeded engagement with the democratic opposition, and ratification and implementation of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights. Likewise, we should also press the EU Member States to accept a statement in the Summit Declaration on Cuba that strongly supports democratic transition, full respect of human rights, and the unconditional release of all political prisoners.

¶24. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: Please deliver the following points to the appropriate MFA official(s) as soon as possible (in advance of the June 16-17 GAERC).

BEGIN NON-PAPER TEXT

IRAN

--We need the EU to implement its pending designations of individuals and entities associated with Iran's nuclear program, adopt UNSCR 1803 as EU policy, and take additional autonomous measures no later than the June 16-17 EU foreign ministers meeting (GAERC).

-- We regret that the EU has still been unable to reach consensus on implementation of UNSCR 1803 and a strong package of new EU measures to accompany the implementation of the resolution. This delay weakens the impact of UNSCR 1803 and the new EU designations, and dilutes the message of EU resolve and of the obligatory nature of UN Security Council Resolutions.

--Iran continues to defy its UNSC obligations. As the IAEA's 26 May 2008 report indicates, Iran has not provided the transparency and access necessary to answer unresolved questions about its nuclear program, including weaponization-related work. Iran has also expanded its enrichment-related activities by the installation of additional cascades at its Fuel Enrichment Plant and of new generation centrifuges for test purposes at the Pilot Fuel Enrichment Plant at Natanz.

--A strong set of EU sanctions would not only send a clear signal of EU resolve, but also remove the excuse of other countries for not acting against Iran. Middle Eastern states and others are looking to the EU for leadership on Iran, and are likely to follow its lead. It is simply not acceptable for the UNSC to pass binding resolutions and to allow over three months to pass with no action to implement them.

--Time is of the essence. Sanctions may take time to work, and meanwhile Iran is mastering enrichment of

uranium. We still assess that Iran could have enough HEU for a weapon by 2010-2015.

IRAQ

-- An expanded European presence (including more Embassies/diplomatic offices from Member States and a larger EC office) would be welcomed by the U.S. and the Iraqis. Has there been any progress on plans to increase the size of the EC representation? It would also be helpful if the EU encouraged Iraq's neighbors to play a more constructive role (including by asking them to send Ambassadors/open Embassies), speaking out against Iran's lethal aid to select Shia militant groups, and by continuing to contribute generously to humanitarian programs assisting displaced Iraqis.

-- We welcome the April 14 decision to extend and expand the rule of law mandate of the EUJUST LEX mission and encourage the EU to engage in other assistance programs.

-- A visit to Iraq by High Representative Solana would be an effective follow-up to PM Maliki's visit to Brussels. We encourage an early visit, as well other exchanges of senior-level visitors. Are there any dates in mind for the Solana visit?

ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE

-- The U.S. remains firmly committed to a two-state solution and is working to support Israeli and Palestinian efforts to achieve a peace agreement before the end of 2008. President Bush and Secretary Rice are personally engaged and view this as a U.S. national interest.

-- It will be vital for the international community to continue to support not only the negotiating process, but also Palestinian institutional capacity building and economic development. Budgetary support is especially crucial as the Palestinian Authority faces a projected budget shortfall of approximately \$400-600 million in 2008.

-- We appreciate critical EU assistance to date, and urge that EU and Member States continue to do all they can to support Palestinian Authority (PA) President Abbas and Prime Minister Fayyad and help meet the needs of the Palestinian people and support the negotiations.

-- We welcome the EU's commitment to the Palestinian Authority's security reform efforts and the EU's decision in May to expand the existing EUPOL COPPS mission to support the PA in the judicial and penitentiary fields in cooperation with international partners. We urge EU Member States to support the Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Police and Rule of Law on June 24 and fully fund all of the criminal justice initiatives that will be proposed there.

-- The situation in Gaza is complicated and poses a serious challenge, as the security, economic, and humanitarian conditions continue to deteriorate. There is no easy solution to this problem, but a new approach is needed and we are talking with Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority leadership about developing an approach that would provide security for Israel, Egypt and the PA, support the legitimate Palestinian Authority, ensure humanitarian needs are being met in Gaza, work towards the resumption of normal economic life for the people of Gaza, and restore conditions that would permit the implementation of the 2005 Agreement on Movement and Access.

-- The United States will not abandon the people of Gaza. We continue to provide humanitarian assistance through the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and other international organizations.

--As the Secretary noted in her remarks with President Abbas in May, the U.S. is committed to providing

-- Continued Israeli settlement construction is not helpful. It is inconsistent with the Roadmap and does not contribute to creating an environment supportive of negotiations. The Roadmap calls for a freeze on settlement activity, and we expect Israel to fulfill its commitments under the Roadmap and to avoid any actions that could prejudice issues that must be resolved through negotiations. With respect to outposts, Israel has committed to removing them, and as President Bush has said, they need to go.

LEBANON

--We ask the EU to join us in pressing for full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1559, 1680, and 1701, including disarmament of militias in Lebanon and normalization of Syrian-Lebanese relations via border demarcation and an exchange of embassies.

--We seek additional EU support to the UN-backed Special Tribunal, which will provide justice to the numerous victims of political violence in Lebanon.

--We seek material and financial support for the new Lebanese government of President Sleiman and PM Siniora, especially credit, development, and security assistance.

--We continue to ask the EU to designate Hizballah as a terrorist organization, and note that Hizballah's use of its weapons against its fellow Lebanese belied its "resistance" credentials and revealed its true terrorist identity.

--We note continued Syrian and Iranian interference in Lebanon, including illegal arms shipments, financial support for Hizballah and other armed groups, Syrian refusal to normalize relations, and collusion with local allies to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty and democracy.

--Engagement with Syria should be conditioned on normalization of Lebanese-Syrian relations via border demarcation and exchange of embassies, an end to Syrian support for terrorist groups, and the prevention of foreign fighters transiting Syria to Iraq.

SUDAN/DARFUR

--The United States and the EU must continue to push for robust implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), particularly resolution of the Abyei boundary dispute. The recent military confrontation between northern and southern troops in Abyei, resulting in extremely dire humanitarian circumstances and the displacement of nearly 100,000 civilians, underscores the importance of permanently resolving key areas of impasse under the CPA.

--Continued U.S. and EU efforts to train and equip troop contributing countries for their participation in the UN/African Union hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) are crucial to helping secure overall peace and security in Sudan.

--The Darfur peace process needs robust reinvigoration. The U.S. and EU must jointly continue support for the UN/AU led process, while increasing pressure on rebel groups to lay down their arms and join the negotiations.

CUBA

--We urge the EU to condition any weakening of Restrictive Measures on real progress on human rights from the Government of Cuba, such as: unconditional release of all political prisoners; free access to information by the Cuban public; the ratification and implementation of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights; and freedom for the EU to pursue "Track 2" engagement with

Cuban civil society and the democratic opposition without retaliation or impediment from the Castro regime.

--Unless these conditions are met, we urge the EU not to eliminate the Restrictive Measures, as the timing of beginning an unconditional dialogue now could legitimize Raul Castro's government and signal that the cosmetic steps the regime has taken are sufficient.

--We support the EU's "two-track policy," and we encourage EU countries to press for real, substantive progress on democracy and human rights under track one.

--However, under track two, the Cuban government often refuses to meet with any foreign officials that also meet with civil society representatives. This has led some in the EU to shy away from meeting figures in the Cuban opposition and broader civil society. This is precisely what the Cuban regime wants: to isolate democratic forces from contacts with the outside world. Cuban civil society needs unequivocal support from the entire international community to retain any space under Cuba's oppressive regime.

--This could be a crossroads in Cuba's political development, and we believe the U.S.-EU Summit must speak to this issue squarely. We want to emphasize points where our policy converges in the U.S.-EU Summit Declaration: democratic transition, human rights, political prisoners, and reconciliation.

WESTERN BALKANS

-- We applaud EU plans to sign the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) at the June GAERC meeting. Rapid implementation of the Interim Agreement will be essential to maintaining positive political momentum and reaffirming the EU's strong commitment to BiH's European future.

-- Kosovo's constitution will come into force on June 15, and the Government of Kosovo will assume responsibility for administering its own territory, government, and economy. As UNMIK downsizes to retain only a few residual functions, the EU and U.S. should maintain the same message: that Kosovo is now the sovereign authority, and that the International Civilian Office (ICO) will supervise Kosovo's implementation of the Ahtisaari Plan.

-- We urge the EU to continue working with the UN to reach an agreement on the transition from UNMIK Police and Justice to EULEX as the lead entity assisting the Government of Kosovo with rule of law issues.

-- We encourage the EU to develop a plan to deploy EULEX throughout Kosovo, paying special heed to avoid division of labor with the UN along ethnic or territorial lines and preserving a clear chain of command on police and justice issues. The EU should take the lead in discussing this plan with the UN and should have a contingency plan for moving ahead in the event the UN does not cooperate on the transfer of assets and logistical support for EULEX deployment.

-- We greatly appreciate the European Commission's leadership in hosting the Kosovo Donors Conference in Brussels on July 11, and we urge political-level representation to affirm strong transatlantic support for Kosovo's rapid economic development and regional integration.

-- (For Lisbon and Valletta only:) We strongly encourage your government to join us, the nearly three-fourths of EU member states and the many other European nations which have recognized Kosovo's independence. Your recognition would send a positive sign of solidarity with the people of Kosovo who seek stability and normalcy after years of conflict and would greatly assist Kosovo's rapid transition into the international family of nations.

CHAD/CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Chad

--Both the U.S. and EU need to support the regional contact group created out of the Dakar Accord and the African Union's efforts to urge both Chad and Sudan to repair diplomatic relations immediately and commit to bringing peace to the region.

--The U.S. and EU should also support the establishment of a security force with a mandate to secure the border, also laid out in the framework of the accord.

--The crisis in Darfur has extended beyond the borders of Sudan, resulting in an estimated 250,000 Sudanese refugees living in Chad. Renewed tensions between Sudan and Chad threaten humanitarian operations and the success of EUFOR and MINURCAT operations.

Central African Republic (CAR)

--The U.S. and EU should show strong support for the peace agreement that the CAR government and the rebels recently signed. This major step forward should be recognized and used as a model for peace in the region.

--The U.S. and EU should ensure that the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) does not take up settlement in the CAR and continue to threaten the safety of the people of the CAR.

--There is also a need to show support for international peacekeeping operations (PKO) efforts in the CAR and encourage greater involvement by the international community.

CENTRAL ASIA

-- As the EU moves ahead on implementing its Central Asia strategy, we welcome its increased engagement in the region. We look forward to working with the EU to advance our common goals in Central Asia. We would like to consult with the EU and the individual Member States to coordinate priorities and programs where possible to maximize their complementarity.

-- The U.S. and EU share the same broad goals in the region: increasing security, especially improved border management; promoting diversification of energy supplies and transport routes; supporting good governance and the rule of law; advancing human rights and democratic freedoms; encouraging sustainable economic development; combating trafficking; and promoting natural resource management. These are all areas in which we can share our expertise with the Central Asian nations, and with each other, to promote our common goals for the region.

-- We look forward to the visit by EU Special Representative for Central Asia Morel to Washington in July to continue these discussions.

-- (For Paris only:) We welcome France's leadership and engagement on Central Asia during its upcoming EU Presidency.

Belarus

-- The Lukashenko regime has failed to carry out our common demand to release all political prisoners unconditionally and to implement electoral reform, and has now sought to extricate itself from our sanctions by expelling U.S. embassy personnel.

-- We appreciate the strong position of the EU, and hope that all EU member states will avoid being drawn into Belarusian regime's efforts to divide us. If they judge

that attacks on our embassy bring concessions from other states, they will apply similar pressure to other embassies to try to intimidate them into shifting policy.

GEORGIA

-- We welcome Solana's trip to Georgia last week and his meetings with Georgian officials and the Abkhaz in support of re-energizing the peace process.

-- To support Georgian-Abkhaz talks, we must continue to press Russia to encourage Abkhazia's direct engagement with Georgian authorities on Tbilisi's peace proposals at the earliest opportunity.

-- We must also continue to urge Russia to decrease tensions in Georgia by repealing the Presidential Instructions authorizing increased government contacts with Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and by withdrawing its additional troops deployed to Abkhazia since April.

-- We also need to call on Georgia to continue showing restraint in response to provocations and to further develop and implement its peace plan.

END NON-PAPER TEXT

RICE